

Conservation Hedge Pack

Our “conservation” hedge pack contains a mixture of 70% thorn (hawthorn or blackthorn or a mix of both) and 30% of 5 other native species which could include common dogwood, field maple, hazel, guelder rose, spindle, or wild roses etc.. The mix included in your hedge pack may vary depending on what is available to lift at the time.

The hedge pack contains at least 70% native thorns:



Hawthorn/quickthorn: (*Crataegus monogyna*) - An ideal hedge plant to include in a conservation mix as it grows into as a dense, prickly hedge which is stock proof and easy to maintain. It produces a mass of white flowers (similar to the blackthorn but they appear later in the spring) followed by an abundance of red “haws” (berries) which are an important food source for birds in the winter.



Blackthorn: (*Prunus spinosa*) – A densely branched shrub with blackish bark and stiff spiny branches. Is often the first out in flower in the spring when it is covered in small white flowers which appear before it comes into leaf, and it produces “sloe” berries in the autumn. It is best avoided if being planted close to where cattle will graze as it can send suckers into the field which can get into their cloven hooves.

The remaining 30% would be made up out of a mix of 5 of the following:



Common dogwood: (*Cornus sanguinea*) – bright green leaves with slightly paler underside. It has small white flowers which are insect pollinated, and fleshy black berries in the autumn which are an important food source for birds. The leaves turn orangey/yellow in the autumn before falling off.



Field maple: (*Acer campestre*) – grows either into a medium sized tree, or if the lead stem is trimmed back, grows well in a native hedge. It produces small yellow/green flowers in spring at the same time as it comes into leaf. The seed is “winged” and is produced in early autumn. Turns a glorious orangey/russet colour in the autumn.



Hazel: (*Corylus avellana*) – traditionally used in hedges as it grows strongly and can be “laid” easily as the hedge matures. It produces flowers very early in the spring before the leaves, which are known as catkins. Later in early autumn it produces small hazelnuts which are a food source for squirrels and corvids (crows, rooks, magpies etc.)



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Guelder rose: (*Viburnum opulus*) – it has largish green leaves in early spring, followed by large corymbs of white flowers in early summer which are pollinated by insects. It produces bunches of bright red berries in late summer which are a good food source for birds. The leaves turn a warm orangey/reddish colour in the autumn.



Spindle: (*Euonymous europaeus*) – will grow into a small tree if allowed, but if main stem is trimmed it makes a good hedging plant. It produces flowers in late spring which are small and yellowish/green. The fruit ripens in the autumn and is cerise pink, purple or red in colour, and when ripe splits to reveal bright orange seeds. The leaves turn to bright russet/red in the autumn. The seeds of the spindle are poisonous if eaten by humans, but are a good food source for birds.



Wild roses: (*rosa canina*) – there are quite a few varieties of wild rose, but the one we include in our hedge pack is the common dogrose (*rosa canina*). It grows quickly through the other species in the hedge, aided by small sharp hooked spines which aid its climbing. The flowers can vary between deep pink and white, but are generally pale pink which mature into an oval red/orange fruit or “hip” which are a food source for birds.

Planting Distances

To establish a thick hedge, plant two rows approximately 30cms (12”) apart. Planting should be staggered in these rows with the plants about 40cms (15”) apart in the rows. This will mean that you will be planting 5 plants per metre (although under some grant schemes you may be asked to plant at closer spacings than this)

For example:



Preparing the ground

The plants will grow 3 times faster in clean fertile ground so it is important to remove all existing weeds or grass from your proposed new hedge line before you start planting your new hedge.

In early autumn the hedge line needs to be marked out and sprayed with a suitable broad spectrum herbicide to kill any existing weeds/grass. If you would rather not



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use herbicides, then the hedge line needs to be either hand weeded or rotovated before planting.

Normally it is not necessary to add fertilizer to the soil, but if it is poor or very heavy ground, then well-rotted farmyard manure or garden compost can be added to the soil. If manure is unavailable, then bone meal or a non-organic fertilizer can be used.

The plants we will supply you with are bare-rooted and are available to plant when dormant from late October until late March/early April (depending on the season), although it is important not to plant when the ground is waterlogged or frozen. The plants can be “notch” planted at the same depth as they were on the nursery – i.e. the depth of the root collar. The plants should then be firmed in to ensure the roots have good contact with the soil to prevent them ‘rocking’ in the wind.

You could consider laying a roll of polypropylene to act as a mulch as this will encourage root growth and suppress weeds. The plants can then be planted through slits in this which are then closed up using pea gravel or something similar. This is very effective at suppressing weeds, but is quite time consuming to use. Alternatively, you could mulch the newly planted hedge line with a thick layer of well rotted manure, composted bark, sheep fleece or some other sort of well rotted compost, which would all help to encourage growth of the hedging plants, but suppress weed re-growth.

The new hedge will need to be protected against damage by livestock, so fencing the hedge line is well worth considering if livestock are nearby. They will also need to be protected against damage from rabbits (and hares). If the fence line is to be fenced on both sides, then it would be worthwhile fixing rabbit fencing to the fencing stakes which would protect the new hedge within the fencing. If the new hedge line is not going to be fenced and there are rabbits in the area, then you will have to consider protecting the individual plants using a suitable spiral shelter supported by a bamboo cane.

We are able to supply suitable spirals to protect them, so please ask for our advice and prices.

For more information or to place an order please contact us:

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